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A STATUS STUDY OF SUMMER READING PROGRAMS.

BY- YORK, L. JEAN

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A QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY INVESTIGATED READING PROGRAMS CONDUCTED IN THE SUMMER OF 1967 IN THE CAPITAL CITIES OF THE UNITED STATES TO STUDY THE PROGRAMS' SOURCE OF SUPPORT, ELIGIBILITY OF STUDENTS, TEACHING PERSONNEL, INSTRUCTION, AND EVALUATIVE TECHNIQUES USED. DATA BASED ON THE RESPONSES OF 30 SUPERINTENDENTS SHOWED THAT 86 PERCENT OF THE CAPITAL CITIES HAD A SUMMER READING PROGRAM IN 1967. TWO-THIRDS OF THESE WERE SUPPORTED BY FEDERAL FUNDS. THE REST WERE FINANCED EITHER BY COMMUNITY OR STATE PARTICIPATION, PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS, TUITION, DISTRICT OR REGULAR SCHOOL FUNDS, OR A COMBINATION OF THESE SOURCES. MOST OF THE PROGRAMS WERE FOR MULTIAGED DISADVANTAGED AND RETARDED READERS WHO EITHER VOLUNTEERED TO ATTEND OR WERE REFERRED BY TEACHERS AND PARENTS. ELIGIBILITY WAS BASED ON THE CHILD'S SOCIOECONOMIC AND READING LEVELS. THE TEACHING PERSONNEL WERE MOSTLY TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS. SOME PROGRAMS EMPLOYED A VARIETY OF PERSONNEL SUCH AS TEACHER AIDES, CLERKS, NURSES, PSYCHOLOGISTS, LIBRARIANS, SOCIOLOGISTS, AND PARENTS. INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION, PROGRAMED LEARNING, AND WIDE USE OF LIBRARY BOOKS WERE EMPHASIZED. IN MOST OF THE PROGRAMS, EVALUATION WAS DONE BY THE TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE (BOSTON, APRIL 24-27, 1968). (NS)

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A STATUS STUDY OF SUMMER READING PROGRAMS

DR. L. JEAN YORK

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Summer Reading Programs

Session

Introduction. In an era when it is vital that every child learn to read competitively with other children of his age the summer reading program has become increasingly important. During the summer teachers and administrators are more free to experiment, to innovate, and to teach in a manner which is not repetitive of the regular program administered from September to June. This paper is a status study of the summer reading programs in the capitol cities of the United States.

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Problem. The primary focus of this study is on the status of the summer reading programs in the capitol cities of the United States. In the last few years millions of dollars have been expended by the local school districts, by the states, and by the federal government to improve the quality of education. Further allotments of money have been expended to improve the quality of education for the disadvantaged children. Few studies have been made which analyze the characteristics of the programs that have resulted from these expenditures. Yet it is important that such knowledge be collected, inasmuch as it can greatly aid administraters and teachers by providing them with information which could help them to plan future programs for children. This study seeks to establish the presence or absence of such patterns.

Objectives. The objectives of the study were cast in question form.

1. Was a summer reading program conducted in 1967?
2. How was the reading program supported?
3. Who was eligible for the reading program?
4. How was eligibility for the program established?
5. What personnel were utilized to conduct the reading program?
6. What kind of instruction was given in the program?
7. How was the reading program evaluated?

Limitation of the study. This study is limited to the reading programs conducted in the summer of 1967 within the capitol cities of the United States. The data were collected from the superintendents

in November and December of 1967.

Inasmuch as the population for this study was limited to the capitol cities of the United States, the conclusions should not be generalized to the problem in the United States as a whole.

Basic assumptions. In a study which involves the completion of a questionnaire certain assumptions need to be made. The assumptions are considered basic to the study.

1. It is assumed that data concerning the summer reading programs are reported accurately by the superintendents.

2. It is assumed that each individual participating in the study completed the questionnaire in privacy and with confidence of not being identified.

3. It is assumed that each superintendent's evaluation is as objective as professionally possible.

4. It is assumed that each superintendent understood the terms which appear on the questionnaire.

Procedures. To achieve the objectives of the study a questionnaire was used for the instrument to collect data. The nature of the problem suggested the use of the sample survey as the method of investigation. The questionnaire method offered the advantage of being able to be tabulated more objectively than a conference or interview could be.

Sample. The sample used for this study was all of the capitol cities of the United States. Each of the capitol cities have a common desire for quality education and are respected in their state for their

educational leadership. Further, the capitol cities afford a sample which includes each of the geographical zones of the United States and also includes a range of population.

Thirty of the 50 superintendents returned their questionnaires. There were 20 superintendents who did not return a questionnaire after a second request was made for their participation in the study. All of the returned questionnaires were usable, hence this represents a utilization of 60% of the original sample.

Treatment of data. The data were analyzed by computing percentages for each of the questions on the questionnaire.

Results and interpretations. The data obtained were interpreted according to the questions cast as objectives for the study.

1. Eighty-six percent of the capitol cities did have a summer reading program in 1967.

2. Sixty-three percent of the summer reading programs were supported by Title I funds; thirteen percent were supported by community participation; six percent were supported by state participation; and six percent were supported by local private contributions. The remaining twelve percent were supported by tuition, district funds, regular school funds or a combination of the aforementioned.

3. Elegibility for the summer reading program was reported thusly:

Sixty-four percent of the summer reading programs were designed for children who were below grade level, who were deprived, or who needed remedial work.

Thirty-six percent of the programs were designed for everyone.

Fifty-three percent of the programs included primary aged children.

Forty-six percent of the programs included junior high aged children.

Forty percent of the programs included senior high aged children.

Sixteen percent included pre-school aged children.

Three percent of the programs included adult aged people.

From this data it is possible to interpret that most schools included programs for several different grade groups. The majority of the programs included the primary, intermediate, and junior high aged children.

4. Elegibility for the summer reading program was established in the following ways:

Sixty-six percent were referred by teachers.

Forty percent were referred by parents.

Twenty-six percent of students requested to be included in the program.

Thirteen percent were referred by a psychologist.

It is evident from these figures that elegibility was established by the utilization of more than one criteria.

Further elegibility was established by the background of the children.

Thirty-six percent of the children attended Title I schools.

Twenty-three percent were assigned because of their socio-economic background.

Hence, it may be interpreted that elegibility was established by more than one group of people plus the socio-economic background of the child.

5. The personnel that were included to conduct the summer reading program included the following personnel in addition to classroom teachers and principals:

Thirty-six percent of the programs used teachers aides.

Thirty-three percent of the programs used clerical workers.

Twenty-six percent of the programs used nurses.

Twenty-three percent of the programs used psychologists.

Twenty percent of the programs used librarians.

Ten percent of the programs used sociologists.

And six percent of the programs used parents.

It is possible to interpret from these data that most school systems used a variety of personnel to conduct the program. The program was not limited to an encounter between the teacher and the student.

6. The kind of instruction provided to the students in the summer reading program included a variety of materials, content, and methodology.

Sixty-six percent of the teachers used individualized reading.

Sixty-six percent of the teachers used programmed learning materials.

Sixty-six percent of the teachers used library books.

Twenty-six percent of the teachers used the basal reading series.

Sixteen percent of the teachers used teaching machines, controlled readers, tachistoscopes, or games.

From this evidence it may be interpreted that the reading program varied greatly from the use of the basal reading text. It would appear that the teachers used a wider range of materials and attempted to place much greater emphasis upon individual need and interest than is commonly done during the school year.

Fifty percent of the summer reading programs also included instruction in spelling, writing, and oral language; from this evidence it can be interpreted that half of the schools were interested in assisting the child with his ability to communicate orally and in written communication. These schools did not see reading as a skill which could be learned in isolation.

Fifty-three percent of the summer reading programs also included mathematics.

Twenty-three percent of the summer reading programs included social studies and science.

Ten percent of the summer reading programs included physical education and health.

From this evidence it can be interpreted that these schools were attempting to aid the children in each of the areas of the regular school curriculum. It could further be interpreted that the child needs special reading skills to meet success in mathematics, social science, science and health as regularly taught. Hence, the summer programs included work on such skills.

Forty-three percent of the programs included field trips on a means of widening the children's background.

Fifty percent of the programs included home visits by school personnel.

Fifty-six percent of the programs used parent conferences.

Forty percent of the programs used report cards .

From this evidence it can be interpreted that many schools saw a need to give children enrichment activities through field trips. They also saw the value of communication with the families as is evidenced by the home visits and the parent conferences. Some schools still felt a responsibility to evaluate the child's work in the regular school pattern and used the report card even during the summer session of work.

7. Summer reading programs were evaluated by a variety of personnel; however, the majority of the programs were evaluated by teachers and/or administrators.

Seventy-three percent of the programs were evaluated by teachers.

Sixty-six percent of the programs were evaluated by administrators.

Twenty-six percent of the programs were evaluated by the remedial reading teachers.

Twenty-six percent of the programs were evaluated by students and parents.

Ten percent of the programs were evaluated by psychologists.

Thirteen percent of the programs were evaluated by a speech therapist, the department of public instruction, or a federal evaluator.

Fifty-six percent of the evaluation teams used an achievement test.

Thirty percent of the teams used an attitude survey.

Sixteen percent of the teams evaluated by counting the number of books the children had read.

Thirty-three percent of the teams evaluated by having conferences.

Thirteen percent of the teams evaluated by using grades.

From this evidence it can be interpreted that a variety of measures were used for evaluating the summer reading program. Most of the evaluation appears to have been done by the utilization of achievement tests either in isolation or combined with another measure such as student attitude, conferences, or number of books read by the students.

There was no evidence of any school having used any sociometric device to ascertain whether the child's position had changed in the classroom as he gained more skill in reading.

Conclusions. The conclusion which follows is based upon the findings of this investigation. For the population studied and within the limits of the study, the following statements seem warranted:

1. Reading programs during the summer of 1967 were held by 86% of the capitol cities.

2. Sixty-three percent of the programs were supported by federal funds.

3. Elegibility was established by reason of the children's attendance at a Title I school or socioeconomic level combined with his reading level being below grade level.

Most of the programs included multi-age instruction. However, the primary, intermediate, and junior high aged group had the greatest number of programs. Fewer programs were held for the pre-school or high school group.

4. Elegibility was usually established by the teachers in the school that the children attended. Although many parents and students also had a voice in requesting entrance to the program.

5. The personnel that were utilized to conduct the summer reading program included not only the classroom teachers, but the utilization of aides and clerical workers in over thirty percent of the cases. Nurses, librarians and psychologists were utilized in twenty percent of the cases.

6. The kind of instruction utilized for the programs placed an emphasis upon individualized reading, programmed learning, or library books in sixty-six percent of the programs. Only twenty-six percent of the schools used the basal program.

7. The program included all the language arts in fifty percent of the schools, and mathematics in fifty-three percent of the schools. Twenty-three percent included social science and science in the in the summer reading program.

8. Evaluation of the programs was chiefly done by teachers and administrators using achievement tests and some attitude surveys.

From this study it can be interpreted that the summer reading programs in the capitol cities have been planned using multi-sensory, multi-level kinds of instruction including all of the latest forms of instruction to aid the disadvantage learner. The instruction has been conducted with the assistance of teacher aides, clerks, librarians, psychologists and sociologists. In many cases the students horizons were enriched by the utilization of field tripe. In many cases an attempt was made to improve communication between the home and school by the use of home visits and parent conferences. Instruction was given in reading and in related areas of the curriculum in an attempt to assist the children to compete more successfully during the school year.

It would appear that the capitol cities were providing leadership in educational practices that might well be emulated in other areas.